

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 00386 041729Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0386

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, IT, MT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN/FRENCH TALKS WITH GOM

REF: A. VALLETTA 341, B. VALLETTA 342,

1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DA-RIN HAS BRIEFED ME ON CURRENT
STATUS ITALIAN/FRENCH TALKS WITH GOM, FOLLOWING MINTOFF'S
"ULTIMATUM" RE APRIL 1 IN LETTER TO ANDREOTTI (REFTELS).

2. DA-RIN SAID MINTOFF LETTER HAD BEEN ILL-RECEIVED IN A
ROME HEAVILY PREOCCUPIED WITH MORE PRESSING MATTERS, AND
GOI HAD IN EFFECT INSTRUCTED HIM: "YOU HANDLE IT LOCALLY."
SO FAR AS DA-RIN KNOWS, EC MEETING IN ROME HAD NOT
DISCUSSED MALTA, EXCEPT POSSIBLY INCIDENTALLY.

3. DA-RIN HAD FIRST TRIED TACK OF GETTING MINTOFF
(THOUGH ABELA AND EDGAR MIZZI) IN EFFECT TO SET ASIDE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VALLET 00386 041729Z

THE LETTER TO ANDREOTTI, POINTING OUT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE
EFFECT OF SUCH LETTERS AND REMINDING MALTESE THAT
EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES WERE NOT IN POSITION TO RESPOND TO
MINTOFF "LIKE QADHAFI PULLING SOMETHING OUT OF HIS DRAWER."
FOLLOWING MINTOFF'S INSISTENCE HOWEVER THAT HE HAD TO
HAVE SOMETHING ON PAPER ON EUROPEAN ATTITUDES, DA-RIN
HAD PERSUADED FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO GET PARIS TO AGREE

TO SEPARATE LETTERS FROM TWO AMBASSADORS, EACH STATING IN SIMILAR FASHION THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS HAD "ADOPTED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON THE MATTER OF MALTESE NEUTRALITY FOLLOWING 1979" AND WERE PREPARED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS ON THAT BASIS.

4. THIS HAD SATISFIED MINTOFF WHO REGARDS LETTER AS FIRST TIME THAT EUROPEANS PREPARED TO GO ON RECORD ON HIS NEUTRALITY IDEA. AS DA-RIN DESCRIBED IT, BOTH SIDES WERE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT NEUTRALITY CONCEPT WOULD NEED TO HAVE TWIN SUPPORTING PILLARS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS. MALTESE NOW TAKE POSITION THAT WITH ACCEPTANCE IN PRINCIPLE OF NEUTRALITY CONCEPT IN HAND, DISCUSSION OF ITS POLITICAL IMPLEMENTATION COULD PROCEED AT MORE LEISURELY PACE SINCE, AFTER ALL, 1979 WAS STILL TWO YEARS OFF. MALTESE SEEM RELAXED ON DOCUMENTARY FORM OF NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE, RECOGNIZING THAT WHILE THEY MAY PREFER MULTILATERAL DOCUMENT, ITALIANS AND OTHERS MAY PREFER CONCEPT TO BE PRODUCT OF SERIES OF BILATERAL UNDERSTANDINGS.

5. SIMILARY ON ECONOMIC SIDE (IN WHICH DA-RIN NOTES THAT FRENCH MUCH LESS INTERESTED) MINTOFF NOW TAKES POSITION THAT DISCUSSIONS SHOULD FIRST FOCUS ON EXTENT TO WHICH INVESTMENTS CAN BE FOUND THAT WOULD HELP MALTESE THEMSELVES TO BRIDGE THE FINANCIAL GAP RESULTING FROM UK DEPARTURE. ONLY AFTER THAT ASPECT HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY EXPLORED WOULD IT BE NECESSARY TO ADDRESS QUESTION WHAT KIND AND HOW MUCH DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VALLET 00386 041729Z

WAS NEEDED.

6. BUT DEADLINE DIPLOMACY HAS NOT CEASED. MALTESE NOW TELL ITALIANS THAT TALKS ON ECONOMIC ASPECTS MUST BE VISIBLE (I.E. DELEGATIONS ETC.) IN TWO WEEKS AND ARRANGEMENTS OUGHT TO BE COMPLETE IN THREE MONTHS. ITALIANS WILL IGNORE THIS BUT DA-RIN SAYS THAT HE NONETHELESS INTENDS TO DO ALL HE CAN TO PULL TOGETHER SOME KIND OF ITALIAN COMBINED PRIVATE/PARASTATAL MISSION TO SIT DOWN WITH MALTESE SOON, HOPEFULLY WITH FRENCH AND OTHERS PARTICIPATING, ALTHOUGH DA-RIN EXPECTS THIS IS PROBABLY TOO MUCH TO EXPECT. HE ALSO SEES NO REASON WHY BRUSSELS EC EXPERTS SHOULD NOT BE PART OF SAME DISCUSSIONS SO AS TO COORDINATE IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF EC ASSISTANCE WITH THAT OF ITALIANS AND OTHERS.

7. IN ANY EVENT, DA-RIN'S IDEA IS TO TRY TO GET DOWN ON PAPER (IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ON THE BASIS OF A "QUESTIONNAIRE") AS DETAILED AN ANALYSIS AS POSSIBLE OF

WHAT MIGHT BE REALISTICALLY POSSIBLE IN MALTA IN TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION. FROM THIS AN EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO DETERMINE WHAT ITALIAN (AND HOPEFULLY FRENCH) PARTICIPATION MIGHT BE. HIS IDEA WOULD BE THAT ITALIANS WOULD THEN TAKE THIS LIST AND GO TO GERMANS AND OTHERS (READ US) AND SAY: "HERE IS WHAT WE THINK WE CAN DO; WHAT PART CAN YOU PLAY?" WHEN I ASKED ABOUT LIGYA'S ROLE IN THIS, DA-RIN ANSWERED THAT MALTESE TAKE POSITION THAT LIBYANS HAVE ALREADY MADE CLEAR THEIR COMMITMENTS AND THAT IT IS NOW UP TO EUROPEANS TO DECIDE WHAT THEY CAN DO.

8. D-RIN ALSO THREW IN WHAT HE SAID WAS PURELY PERSONAL IDEA THAT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF USG REPS WERE ALSO TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS KIND OF EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH MALTESE SO THAT ONCE AND FOR ALL WE COULD ALL GET WOWN TO BRASS TACKS ON PROSPECTS FOR INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION HERE. I
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 VALLET 00386 041729Z

DEMURRED, SAYING THAT WHILE WE APPRECIATE BEING KEPT INFORMED, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO BE PART OF ANY MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH MALTESE AT THIS STAGE ON ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF 1979. LAINGEN

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